

Student Name:

Date:

## **Social Justice Poetry or Song Project**

**GOAL:** Students will read and annotate TEN poems on the topic of justice and then create their own original poem or lyrics, inspired by the other books we have read this year. Each class will choose a winning poet or songwriter.

The **FINAL DRAFT** of the poem or song will be due March 20th, 2017 and will be worth 50 points and count as a writing project.

- Student poems **MUST** use **TWO DIFFERENT POEMS**, one from Choices A and one from Choices B, to construct the poem or song.
- They also must **INCLUDE TWO to FOUR QUOTES** from the BGB and **TWO to FOUR QUOTES** from those selected poems.
- The final draft must be **TWO PAGES IN LENGTH, TYPED** and meet the English guidelines.
- Each poem should have a unique title that reflects the message of the student's poem or song.

To prepare, annotate the following poems and answer questions if presented.

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**CHOICES A: Each student MUST USE one poem from this group in their poem or song.**

**#1**

**“Justice” by Rudyard Kipling**

Across a world where all men grieve  
And grieving strive the more,  
The great days range like tides and leave  
Our dead on every shore.  
Heavy the load we undergo,  
And our own hands prepare,  
If we have parley with the foe,  
The load our sons must bear.

Before we loose the word  
That bids new worlds to birth,  
Needs must we loosen first the sword  
Of Justice upon earth;  
Or else all else is vain  
Since life on earth began,  
And the spent world sinks back again  
Hopeless of God and Man.

A People and their King  
Through ancient sin grown strong,  
Because they feared no reckoning  
Would set no bound to wrong;  
But now their hour is past,  
And we who bore it find  
Evil Incarnate hell at last  
To answer to mankind.

For agony and spoil  
Of nations beat to dust,  
For poisoned air and tortured soil  
And cold, commanded lust,  
And every secret woe  
The shuddering waters saw.  
Willed and fulfilled by high and low.  
Let them relearn the Low.

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That when the dooms are read,  
Not high nor low shall say:-  
' My haughty or my humble head  
Was saved me in this day.'  
That, till the end of time,  
Their remnant shall recall  
Their fathers old, confederate crime  
Availed them not at all.

That neither schools nor priests,  
Nor Kings may build again  
A people with the heart of beasts  
Made wise concerning men.  
Whereby our dead shall sleep  
In honour, unbetrayed,  
And we in faith and honour keep  
That peace for which they paid.

**PAIRED QUESTIONS:**

**1. Who are some of the authority figures who make decisions for the people in the poem?**

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**2. Use a line of poetry that supports your answer.**

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**3. What is the overall message or advice in the poem about what must happen to restore peace and/or justice?**

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**4. Use a line of poetry that supports your answer.**

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**#2**

**“The Salem Witch Trials” by Jane Doe**

It was 1692, in Salem Village that the abhorrence began  
A time of pandemonium and darkness that swept across the land  
A village of pure jealousy, economic loss, and strife  
Where 19 innocent men and women had an end put to their life

A cold winter, young girls experienced turbulent fits  
Frightened and confused, they claimed they were bewitched  
The girls blamed their affliction on the social outcasts of their town  
And suspicion of the Satan’s witchcraft circulated all around

Mary Easty was 58 years old, a wife and mother of seven  
When she had her kind soul taken away, too early to go to heaven  
Respected and religious, everyone was shocked when she was accused  
But perhaps it was envy, for they coveted the costly land she’d lose

So on April 22nd, Mary was then taken to examination in court  
She remained calm and respectful, denying witchcraft of any sort  
“I will say it, if it was my last, I am clear of this sin”  
Her eyes quivering with tears, revealing her fear from within

She was sentenced to prison, the court disregarding her pleas  
But after a few grisly days, she was once again released  
But the young girls were dedicated to argue, debate, and fight  
Claiming that Mary’s apparition strangles them in the night

It was at midnight, after two days of certainty that she was free  
The marshall came into Mary’s house and seized her away from her family  
Thrown back into prison, and laden with chains  
She was condemned to death, her short-lived freedom in vain

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She was carted to Gallows Hill, a barren and arid slope  
Like the corpse of death itself, deprived of all hope  
A shadowy silhouette, anticipating its prey  
Prepared to pounce, and steal guiltless lives away

Preceding her execution, she spoke her final goodbyes  
To her husband, her children, while everyone present cried  
For her parting words were as affectionate and religious as could be  
Because, never again, will words be spoken by Mary Easty  
The noose clutched her neck, she held her head low  
Tears glided down her cheeks, one last time before she'd go  
She prayed to her God, softly and subdued she said  
"If it be possible, no more innocent blood be shed"

**PAIRED QUESTIONS:**

**1. What are some of the reasons why charges of witchcraft were made in Salem Village?**

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**2. Use a line of poetry that supports your answer.**

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**3. What is Mary Easty's hope that might be granted upon her death?**

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**4. Use a line of poetry that supports your answer.**

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**#3**

**“Riddle” by William Heyen**

From Belsen a crate of gold teeth,  
from Dachau a mountain of shoes,  
from Auschwitz a skin lampshade.  
Who killed the Jews?  
Not I, cries the typist,  
not I, cries the engineer,  
not I, cries Adolf Eichmann,  
not I, cries Albert Speer.  
My friend Fritz Nova lost his father –  
a petty official had to choose.  
My friend Lou Abrahms lost his brother.  
Who killed the Jews?  
David Nova swallowed gas,  
Hyman Abrahms was beaten and starved.  
Some men signed their papers,  
and some stood guard,  
and some herded them in,  
and some dropped the pellets,  
and some spread the ashes,  
and some hosed the walls,  
and some planted the wheat,  
and some poured the steel,  
and some cleared the rails,  
and some raised the cattle.  
Some smelled the smoke,  
some just heard the news.  
Were they Germans? Were they Nazis?  
Were they human? Who killed the Jews?  
The stars will remember the gold,  
the sun will remember the shoes,  
the moon will remember the skin.  
But who killed the Jews?

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**PAIRED QUESTIONS:**

**1. Do you think the narrator of this poem is Jewish? Why or why not?**

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**2. Use a line of poetry that supports your answer.**

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**3. Why does the poet seem to focus on things like shoes, wheat, steal, or other aspects of everyday life? What are these items supposed to symbolize?**

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**4. What puzzle or riddle is the narrator trying to solve? Based on the poem, what does the poet suggest is the answer?**

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**5. Use a line of poetry that supports your answer.**

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**#4**

**“Who But the Lord” by Langston Hughes**

I looked and I saw  
That man they call the Law.  
He was coming  
Down the street at me!  
I had visions in my head  
Of being laid out cold and dead,

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Or else murdered  
By the third degree.  
I said, O, Lord, if you can,□  
Save me from that man!□  
Don't let him make a pulp out of me!□  
But the Lord he was not quick.  
The Law raised up his stick  
And beat the living hell  
Out of me!  
Now, I do not understand  
Why God don't protect a man  
From police brutality.  
Being poor and black,  
I've no weapon to strike back  
So who but the Lord  
Can protect me?  
We'll see.

**PAIRED QUESTIONS:**

**1. Who is represented by the words "The Law?"**

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**2. Why does the author capitalize the word "Law?"**

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**3. Why does the author capitalize the word "Lord?"**

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**4. The narrator has “no weapon to strike back.” What kind of weapon is he referring to besides a knife or a gun?**

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**#5**

**“The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll” by Bob Dylan**

William Zanzinger killed poor Hattie Carroll  
With a cane that he twirled around his diamond ring finger  
At a Baltimore hotel society gath’rin’  
And the cops were called in and his weapon took from him  
As they rode him in custody down to the station  
And booked William Zanzinger for first-degree murder  
But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears  
Take the rag away from your face  
Now ain’t the time for your tears

William Zanzinger, who at twenty-four years  
Owns a tobacco farm of six hundred acres  
With rich wealthy parents who provide and protect him  
And high office relations in the politics of Maryland  
Reacted to his deed with a shrug of his shoulders  
And swear words and sneering, and his tongue it was snarling  
In a matter of minutes on bail was out walking  
But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears  
Take the rag away from your face  
Now ain’t the time for your tears

Hattie Carroll was a maid of the kitchen  
She was fifty-one years old and gave birth to ten children  
Who carried the dishes and took out the garbage  
And never sat once at the head of the table  
And didn’t even talk to the people at the table  
Who just cleaned up all the food from the table  
And emptied the ashtrays on a whole other level  
Got killed by a blow, lay slain by a cane  
That sailed through the air and came down through the room

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Doomed and determined to destroy all the gentle  
And she never done nothing to William Zanzinger  
But you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears  
Take the rag away from your face  
Now ain't the time for your tears

In the courtroom of honor, the judge pounded his gavel  
To show that all's equal and that the courts are on the level  
And that the strings in the books ain't pulled and persuaded  
And that even the nobles get properly handled  
Once that the cops have chased after and caught 'em  
And that the ladder of law has no top and no bottom  
Stared at the person who killed for no reason  
Who just happened to be feelin' that way without warnin'  
And he spoke through his cloak, most deep and distinguished  
And handed out strongly, for penalty and repentance  
William Zanzinger with a six-month sentence  
Oh, but you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears  
Bury the rag deep in your face  
For now's the time for your tears

**PAIRED QUESTIONS:**

**1.What motivation is given for William Zanzinger's crime?**

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**2. Use a line of poetry to support your answer.**

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**3. What literary device is the poet using when he writes, “And he spoke through his cloak, most deep and distinguished/And handed out strongly, for penalty and repentance.”**

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**4. What emotion does the poet expect the readers to have at the end of the poem as a result of his literary device and the way he leads up to the verdict?**

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**CHOICES B: Each student MUST USE one poem from this group**

**#6**

**“Justice” by Langston Hughes**

That Justice is a blind goddess  
Is a thing to which we black are wise:  
Her bandage hides two festering sores  
That once perhaps were eyes.

**#7**

**“Carrying Our Words” by Ofelia Zepeda**

We travel carrying our words.  
We arrive at the ocean.  
With our words we are able to speak  
of the sounds of thunderous waves.  
We speak of how majestic it is,  
of the ocean power that gifts us songs.  
We sing of our respect  
and call it our relative.

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**#8**

**“Bully for Him” by Donal Mahoney**

If he were in high school  
they'd call him a bully  
and take him to

the principal's office  
for counseling.  
But he's an adult

who believes life  
should be the way  
he says it should be.

When you run into him  
at the coffee shop  
he's quick to tell you

why you're wrong.  
You listen to him  
and politely say

that may be so  
but you don't know  
and quietly walk away

**#9**

**“what the dead know by heart” by Donte Collins**

lately, when asked how are you, i  
respond with a name no longer living

Rekia, Jamar, Sandra

i am alive by luck at this point. i wonder  
often: if the gun that will unmake me  
is yet made, what white birth

will bury me, how many bullets, like a  
flock of blue jays, will come carry my black

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to its final bed, which photo will be used

to water down my blood. today i did  
not die and there is no god or law to  
thank. the bullet missed my head

and landed in another. today, i passed  
a mirror and did not see a body, instead  
a suggestion, a debate, a blank

post-it note there looking back. i  
haven't enough room to both rage and  
weep. i go to cry and each tear turns

to steam. I say *I matter* and a ghost  
white hand appears over my mouth

## **#10**

### **"There Can Be No Justice" by Frederick Kesner**

Provide us just scales  
with which to measure  
determine the truth  
provide no displeasure

be objective and distant  
make sure you're blindfolded  
mete out the verdict  
swift and without fail.

But for the value of life  
remember your own  
Each breath you take  
opportunities blown

Justice is never served  
for the dead remain dead  
their chances forfeited  
memories defaulted

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punitive arrangements  
may placate the bereaved  
but the dead remain deceased.

**Planning Area:**

**Write down the numbers of the two poems that you selected \_\_\_\_\_**

**What are important similarities between the poems that you selected and your BGB?**

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**What are important differences between the poems that you selected and your BGB?**

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**What are common lessons between the poems that you selected and your BGB?**

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**What are different lessons between the poems that you selected and your BGB?**

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**QUOTES FROM POEMS:**

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